

United States Department of Agriculture  
National Agricultural Statistics Service  
New England Field Office

NEWS RELEASE

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United States Department of Agriculture  
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New England Field Office  
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**Number of Farms in US declines, but not in New England**

Concord, NH - The number of farms in the US totaled to 2.1 million farms in 2012, a decrease of 4 percent from 2007, according to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) in the 2012 Census of Agriculture Preliminary Report. "Nationally, the number of farms may have declined however, across the New England States, the number of farms actually increased 5 percent from 2007, up to 34,878 farms" accordingly to Gary Keough, USDA NASS State Statistician for the New England States.

This preliminary report contains just a fraction of information that will be available in the full report that is scheduled to be released later this spring. The preliminary report contains US and State level number of farms, total land in farms, total market value of crops and livestock farms by size as well as demographic information like the average age, number of principal farm operators by age group and years on their current farm, number of men and women principal farm operators, as well as number of farmers by race and ethnicity. "The preliminary report tells us what some of the overall trends are but we have to wait for the full report to identify some of the factors influencing the trends", says Keough. "For example, the total land in New England farms increased 4 percent to 4.211 million acres. This is the continuation of a trend that started around 2002. But land in farms includes crop land, pastureland, woodland, and other land that can include streams, ponds, wetlands, and land in buildings. In some States, it also includes coastal areas used for producing shellfish and farm raised fish. We won't know which of these factors are influencing the trend until the full report comes out."

Other highlights include:

- The number of beginning farmers, those with less than 10 years experience on their current farm, increased in New England but decrease at the US level. "While the nationally the numbers declined 19.6 percent from 2007, in New England the number of beginning farmers increased by 401 farmers. Those with less than 5 years experience increased by 549 but we also found a decrease of 148 with for those between 5 and 9 years." added Keough.
- The average age of New England farmers was 57.6 years, up from 56.5 years in 2007.
- The number farms with women principal operator increased to 9,695, up 15 percent. The percent of farms with women principal operators was 28 percent, up from 25 percent in 2007.
- Farms with sales of \$1 million or more, at 507, increase 16 percent. Farms with \$250,000 to \$999,999 in sales decrease 2 percent. Farms with \$50,000 and \$249,000 in sales increased 4 percent and farms with less than \$50,000 in sales increased 6 percent.

The full preliminary report is available at [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov)

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**Rhode Island:** Number of farms at 1,243 is up 2% from 2007. Land in farms at 69,589 is up 3 percent from 2007. The average farm size was 56 acres and the median farm size was 24 acres.

FARMS AND LAND IN FARMS	2012 Total	2007 total	2012 as percent of 2007
Farms number	1,243	1,219	102%
Land in farms acres	69,589	67,819	103%
Average size of farm acres	56	56	100%
Median size of farm acres	20	24	

**Farms by size.** The number of farms with less than 9 acres increased and accounted for 35 percent of all farms. The number of farms with between 10 and 49 acres and between 50 and 179 acres decreased. The number of farms with 180 acres or more increased.

Farms by size:	2012 Total	2012 Percent of all farms	2007 total	2007 Percent of all farms	2012 as percent of 2007	Net Change
1 to 9 acres	433	35%	353	29%	123%	80
10 to 49 acres	451	36%	484	40%	93%	-33
50 to 179 acres	278	22%	308	25%	90%	-30

180 to 499 acres	70	6%	67	5%	104%	3
500 to 999 acres	7	1%	5	<1%	140%	2
1,000 acres or more	4	<1%	2	<1%	200%	2

**Market value of sales.** Total Market value of sales declined 9 percent from 2007. Crop sales declined 12 percent while livestock sales increased 4 percent.

Market value of agricultural products	2012 Total	2012 Percent of total	2007 total	2007 Percent of total	2012 as percent of 2007
Total sold \$1,000	59,652		65,908		91%
Average per farm dollars	47,990		54,067		89%
Crops, including nursery and greenhouse crops \$1,000	48,981	82%	55,602	84%	88%
Livestock, poultry, and their products \$1,000	10,671	18%	10,306	16%	104%
Government payments \$1,000	2,345		743		316%

**Farms by economic class.** The distribution of farms by economic class changed slightly from 2007. The number of farms with between \$50,000 and \$249,000 was the only group that showed an increase, up 38 farms or 32 percent from 2007.

Farms by economic class:	2012 Total	2012 Percent of all farms	2007 total	2007 Percent of all farms	2012 as percent of 2007	Net Change
Less than \$50,000	1,034	83%	1,039	85%	100%	-5
\$50,000 to \$249,999	158	13%	120	10%	132%	38
\$250,000 to \$999,999	42	3%	47	4%	89%	-5
\$1,000,000 or more	9	1%	13	1%	69%	-4

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**Demographics**

Average age of the principal operator was 56.7 years compared to 56.3 years in 2007.

**Age group:** The number of farmers between 35 and 44 declined as did those over 75. Other age groups increased.

Age group:	2012 Total	2012 Percent of total	2007 total	2007 Percent of total	2012 as percent of 2007	Net Change
Under 25 years	10	1%	5	<1%	200%	5
25 to 34 years	57	5%	52	4%	110%	5
35 to 44 years	115	9%	173	14%	66%	-58
45 to 54 years	361	29%	336	28%	107%	25
55 to 64 years	337	27%	310	25%	109%	27
65 to 74 years	261	21%	236	19%	111%	25
75 years and over	102	8%	107	9%	95%	-5

**Years on present farm.** This is the closest thing we have for estimating the number of beginning farmers. Beginning farmer is typically defined as a person who has been farming less than 10 years. In this table farmers that could have been farming on one farm and moved to a new farm should be counting only the years on the new farm. However, this occurrence should be low.

Beginning farmers made up over 31 percent of all principal farm operators compared to 25 percent in 2007. The number of farmer with more than 10 years on the present farm decreased 6 percent.

Years on present farm:	2012 Total	2012 Percent of total	2007 total	2007 Percent of total	2012 as percent of 2007	Net Change
2 years or less	72	6%	56	5%	129%	16
3 or 4 years	90	7%	73	6%	123%	17
5 to 9 years	221	18%	172	14%	128%	49
10 years or more	860	69%	918	75%	94%	-58

**Women Farmers.** Women principal farm operators accounted for 25% of the principal farm operators, up from 24 percent in 2007.

Sex of operator:	2012 Total	2012 Percent of total	2007 total	2007 Percent of total	2012 as percent of 2007
Male	937	75%	922	76%	102%
Female	306	25%	297	24%	103%